



KIRKLAND SALARY COMMISSION

Lauren Hall-Stigerts, Chair • Greta Climer • Bryan Olay

AGENDA

KIRKLAND SALARY COMMISSION MEETING CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER AND VIRTUAL – ZOOM

Wednesday, September 10, 2025

5:00 p.m.

Zoom Link: <https://kirklandwa-gov.zoom.us/j/88640234194>

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. INTRODUCTIONS AND ROLL CALL
3. APPROVE MEETING MINUTES
 - a. December 9, 2024
4. PUBLIC COMMENT
5. COMMISSION BUSINESS
 - a. Discussion of Comparable City Council Salary and Benefits Analysis
 - b. General Updates from Staff Liaison
6. ADJOURNMENT



KIRKLAND SALARY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
December 9, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Lauren Hall-Stigerts called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members present: Commissioner Bryan Olay, Vice Chair Greta Climer, and Chair Lauren Hall-Stigerts.

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

a. October 30, 2024

Motion to approve the minutes as presented.

Moved by Vice Chair Climer, seconded by Commissioner Olay.

Vote: Motion carried unanimously 3-0.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

5. BUSINESS

a. Consideration of Proposed Resolution 24-001, Relating to the Salaries Paid to the Mayor and City Councilmembers

Motion to Approve Resolution 24-001, entitled "A RESOLUTION OF THE KIRKLAND SALARY COMMISSION RELATING TO THE SALARIES PAID TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCILMEMBERS."

Moved by Commissioner Olay, seconded by Vice Chair Climer.

Vote: Motion carried unanimously 3-0.

b. Consideration of Proposed Resolution 24-002, Recommending Modification to the Salary Commission's Meeting Frequency and the Commission Members' Term Lengths

Motion to Approve Resolution 24-002, entitled "A RESOLUTION OF THE KIRKLAND SALARY COMMISSION RECOMMENDING MODIFICATION OF THE SALARY COMMISSION'S MEETING FREQUENCY AND THE COMMISSION MEMBER'S TERM LENGTHS."

Moved by Vice Chair Climer, seconded by Commissioner Olay.

Vote: Motion carried unanimously 3-0.

5. STAFF REPORTS AND/OR COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Chair Hall-Stigerts thanked staff for their work and other Commissioners for their service.



KIRKLAND SALARY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
December 9, 2024

6. ADJOURNMENT

The Salary Commission Meeting of December 9, 2024, was adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

Lauren Hall-Stigerts, Salary Commission Chair



CITY OF KIRKLAND
123 5th Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033
www.kirklandwa.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: Salary Commission

From: Darcey Eilers, City Attorney
Lauren Knox, Labor and Employee Relations Manager

Date: September 5, 2025

Subject: City Council Compensation and Benefits Comparison Report for 2025

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Salary Commission reviews the 2025 survey of comparison cities' council compensation and benefits. Based on this data, staff recommends that the Kirkland City Council's compensation and benefits remain at the current rates.

BACKGROUND:

The Kirkland Salary Commission is entrusted with reviewing the salaries of the City's mayor and councilmembers. After reviewing salaries, the Salary Commission may determine that those salaries should be increased or decreased, which decision then takes effect automatically without any City Council action. Pursuant to chapter 3.11 of the Kirkland Municipal Code, the Commission is required to meet at least annually to fulfill its duties.

In 2023, the Salary Commission approved Resolution No. 23-001, which significantly increased the salaries paid to the mayor and councilmembers and enhanced other benefits provided to Council, with the stated goal that more equitable compensation for their significant part-time commitments as elected officials will enable a more diverse set of community members to seek and serve in positions on the City Council.

Last year, the Salary Commission approved Resolution No. 24-001, which neither increased nor decreased the City Council's salaries but maintained the current rate of \$4,000 per month for the mayor and \$3,200 per month for the councilmembers. Additionally, the Salary Commission continued the benefits, allowances, and stipends previously established in Resolution No. 23-001, including the medical, dental, and vision benefits; the monthly transportation allowance (\$282/month); the cell phone stipend (\$45/month); and the childcare stipend (\$1,000/month).

The Human Resources Department has completed its 2025 annual report of comparative councilmember compensation and benefits, which is provided as Attachment A. This year, eleven cities were surveyed. All of them have historically been utilized as comparators for the City of Kirkland.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

The compensation survey reveals an average monthly compensation of \$2,149 for city councilmembers and \$2,859 for mayors. Notably, there are only two comparators (Bellevue and Bothell) with a mayoral position equivalent to Kirkland, as the remaining comparators have a full-time, highly compensated mayor. This is because those cities are organized under the mayor-council form of government, while Kirkland, Bellevue, and Bothell are organized under the council-manager form of government.

The survey data reveals that Kirkland's monthly compensation for councilmembers is above the average by more than \$1,000 per month, and for the mayor is above the average by more than \$1,100 per month. Additionally, when considering other cash benefits, Kirkland's compensation and cash benefits are above all comparison cities.

The benefits survey is provided in Attachment B. The benefits survey provides additional details about all non-salary specific benefits received by those serving on council, including information about availability of medical, dental, and vision insurance; life insurance; access to deferred compensation, MEBT, and/or flexible spending accounts; transportation benefits; and other types of non-salary benefits.

Staff have also provided two additional pieces of information that may be helpful in evaluating suitable compensation and benefits for Kirkland's councilmembers. First, in Attachment C, staff compiled demographics data from the U.S. Census Bureau for each comparator city to provide context for evaluating possible similarities and differences in the comparator cities. Second, in Attachment D, staff has provided the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue region over time to illustrate increases in the cost of living.

In 2025, most City of Kirkland employees received a 3.6 percent cost of living adjustment to their wages. The City's settled collective bargaining agreements for 2026 all reflect a 2.7 percent cost of living adjustment.

Staff recommend that the Salary Commission review the 2025 survey data. Following Salary Commission direction, staff will prepare for the Commission's consideration a proposed resolution establishing 2026 compensation and benefits.

NEXT STEPS

Following Salary Commission direction, staff will prepare for the Commission's consideration a proposed resolution establishing 2026 compensation and benefits. The Commission is not required to take any action (such as adopting a resolution) if it does not desire to increase or decrease Council's salaries and benefits.

An additional next step for staff is to present for City Council's consideration a few policy issues recommended by the Salary Commission in prior years. Last year the Salary Commission approved Resolution No. 24-002, which recommends to City Council that the frequency of the Salary Commission meetings be modified and that, relatedly, the term length for Salary Commission members also be modified. The proposal was to decrease meeting frequency from annually to once every other even-numbered year beginning in 2026, and to modify the term length from three years to four years. Prior to that, the Salary Commission recommended through Resolution No. 23-002 that the Council consider increasing the number of Salary Commission members from three to five to enhance the Commission's deliberative

and decision-making processes and offer the opportunity for more diverse perspectives. Due to the high volume of items on the Council's calendar, staff have not yet had the opportunity to formally present the Council with these topics for discussion. Staff intends to include these issues on the Council's agenda in the first quarter of 2026.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – 2025 Comparator Cities Compensation Survey

Attachment B – 2025 Comparator Cities Benefits Survey

Attachment C – Comparator Cities Demographics Data

Attachment D – Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue Consumer Price Index Data (2018-2025)

Attachment A
2025 Mayor/Councilmember Compensation Survey

City	Population	Mayor Monthly Compensation	Councilmember Monthly Compensation	Change from 2024	Other Monthly Cash Benefits*	2025 Councilmember Monthly Comp + Cash Benefits	Other Cash Benefits Details	How Often is Salary Commission Convened	Notes
Auburn	90,320	N/A	\$ 1,800	\$ 133	\$ 220	\$ 2,020	\$220/month regional meeting attendance.	Annually	Deputy Mayor: \$2,400/month
Bellevue	158,000	\$ 3,687	\$ 3,120	\$ 726	\$ 454	\$ 3,574	\$388.87/month car allowance & \$65/month cell stipend.	Ad hoc - convened in 2016 and 2024	Deputy Mayor: \$3,309.33/month. Salary Commission recommended meeting every 2-3 years for more consistent review and adjustment of wages.
Bothell	51,760	\$ 2,030	\$ 1,730	\$ 430	\$ -	\$ 1,730		Ad hoc - convened in 2019, 2022, and 2024	Deputy Mayor: \$1,900/month. Low-income stipend of \$400/month for any Councilmember at or below 80% of KCMI.
Edmonds	42,853	N/A	\$ 1,756	\$ 51	\$ 1,021	\$ 2,778	\$1,021.30/month for waiving benefits. Low income stipend up to \$500/month.	Every other year (odd years). Paused until 2027 due to budget issues.	Council President: \$2,107.58/month (20% above Councilmember salary).
Everett	114,700	N/A	\$ 2,781	\$ 82	\$ 233	\$ 3,014	\$2,800/year in HRA/VEBA if family enrolled in CDHP PPO & complete annual evaluation.	Every other year (odd years)	Council President: \$3,615/month (30% above Councilmember salary).
Federal Way	102,900	N/A	\$ 1,628	\$ 81	\$ 494	\$ 2,122	\$494.19/month to HRA/VEBA.	Every other year (even years)	
Issaquah**	41,560	N/A	\$ 1,765	\$ 65	\$ 250	\$ 2,015	\$200/month deferred comp, \$350/month low-income stipend, \$50/month internet stipend.	Ad hoc - convened in 2015 and 2023	Deputy Council President: \$1,865/month, Council President: \$1,965/month.
Kent	140,100	N/A	\$ 3,108	\$ 108	\$ -	\$ 3,108		Annually	Council President: \$3,574/month.
Lynnwood	42,540	N/A	\$ 1,650	\$ 750	\$ 750	\$ 2,400	Additional \$750/month if attend 5 regular Council meetings in the month (includes 4 automatic excused absences per year).	Salary Commission disbanded - City Council sets salaries (for future Councils)	Council President: \$1,850/month.
Redmond	82,380	N/A	\$ 2,300	\$ 746	\$ 300	\$ 2,600	Additional \$300/month stipend to be used at Councilmember's discretion. Stipend is taxable but is not subject to MEBT.	Every other year (even years)	Council President: \$2,500/month
Renton	106,785	N/A	\$ 2,000	No change	\$ 40	\$ 2,040	2% of salary for deferred comp.	Every 4 years	City Council President: \$2,300/month.
	Average:	\$2,859	\$ 2,149		\$ 342	\$ 2,491		<i>Average - every 3 years; median - every other year</i>	
Kirkland	97,850	\$ 4,000	\$ 3,200	No change	\$ 1,088	\$ 4,288	\$282/month transportation allowance, \$470/month allowance for waiving benefits, \$50/month cellphone stipend in lieu of City phone & data. Childcare stipend up to \$1000/month. Low-income stipend up to \$1000/month.	Annually	Other Monthly Cash Benefits includes average cost per Councilmember of Childcare stipend. Low income stipend not included.

Note: Cities listed as "N/A" have a full-time, highly-compensated Mayor.
Data Source: Associate of Washington Cities 2025 Salary & Benefit Survey

*Childcare and low-income stipends are included on an average per Councilmember basis, based upon current enrollment

**Not a traditional comparable, but included for reference.

Attachment B
2025 Councilmember Benefits Survey

City	Population	Benefits	M/D/V Benefits for Dependents
Auburn	90,320	M/D/V: Coverage available through AWC. Councilmembers must pay 100% of the premium costs. (Council has not voted to obtain medical coverage.) Additional pay: \$55 for attendance at regional meetings up to \$220 per month.	Not provided.
Bellevue	158,000	M/D/V: Coverage available at same rates as non-represented employees: Kaiser & Premera Choice medical - no employee contribution. Life Insurance: City provides \$50k. MEBT: City match of up to 6.2% Flexible Spending: Voluntary participation in a Flexible Spending Account. Transportation: PERS enrolled Councilmembers eligible for free ORCA transit pass. Councilmembers receive monthly car allowance of \$388.87 Additional Pay: Cell phone/data stipend of \$65/month. (3 Councilmembers currently receive cell phone + data stipend)	Family coverage provided at same rates as non-represented employees; employee pays premiums. (See rates PDF.)
Bothell	51,760	M/D/V: not offered to Councilmembers. Deferred Comp: Voluntary participation.	Not provided.
Edmonds	42,853	M/D/V: City pays for 100% of the highest cost medical plan + 100% of the dental and vision plans for the Councilmember. Employee has option to either enroll in the City's medical insurance plan or opt-out and receive a cash value for the M/D/V premiums (\$1,021.30). Life Insurance: City paid basic term life with a face value of \$10,000 and \$1,000 on dependents. AD&D benefit of \$6,000. MEBT: 6.2% employer match (in lieu of Social Security). Includes \$100,000 life insurance policy. Deferred comp: Councilmembers may participate in any of three deferred comp programs; no employer match or contribution. Other: Voluntary Flexible Spending Account; voluntary short-term disability through AFLAC; EAP included with M/D/V or Life enrollment.	Family coverage available; employee pays premiums. (See rates PDF.)
Everett	114,700	M/D/V: City pays for 85% & councilmember pays 15% of medical premium for the HMA Classic PPO or Kaiser medical plan, or City pays 95% of premium under HMA CDHP PPO. City pays 100% of premiums for dental/vision. Life & AD&D Insurance & LTD: City paid benefit is 2x annual salary rounded up to next \$1,000 (if not already an exact multiple of \$1,000); + \$2,000 up to a maximum of \$150,000 (the limit is well above what the calculation comes out to). Eligible for City paid long-term disability (LTD) plan. Flexible Spending Account & Deferred Comp: Voluntary participation HRA/VEBA: The employee/spouse/DP receive \$1,200/\$2,400 in their HRA/VEBA; if they are on the CDHP and complete the annual evaluation for both employee and spouse/DP they will receive an additional \$200/400 in the HRA/VEBA.	Same for eligible dependents: City pays for 85% & councilmember pays 15% of medical premium for the HMA Classic PPO or Kaiser medical plan, or City pays 95% of premium under HMA CDHP PPO. City pays 100% of premiums for dental/vision.
Federal Way	102,900	M/D/V: not offered to Councilmembers. Deferred Comp: May choose to participate in Social Security or in deferred comp plan with a Councilmember minimum contribution of 6.2% for 6.2% City match. HRA/VEBA: City contribution of \$494.19/month Community Center Pass: Eligible for 2 member annual Community Center Pass.	None provided.
Issaquah*	41,560	M/D/V: None offered. Life Insurance: \$50,000 Group Basic Term life insurance plan. City pays premium for this plus \$10,000 dependent life insurance, \$9.50/month. Deferred comp: City will max contributions up to \$200/month. Low-Income Stipend: Councilmembers whose household income is at or below 80% of KC AMI will receive monthly stipend of \$350. Additional pay: \$50/month internet stipend; receive City-issued computer equipment, software, and cell phone.	None offered.
Kent	140,100	M/D/V: City pays 94% & Employee pays 6% of their premiums. Deferred Comp, Flexible Spending Account, and Employee Assistance Program: Voluntary participation	Family coverage available; employee pays premiums, employee pays 100% for their dependents (spouse and
Lynnwood	42,540	M/D/V: City pays 100% for Councilmember. Life and AD&D: \$50,000 policy paid for by City.	City pays 90% for dependent coverage, employee pays 10%.
Redmond	82,380	M/D/V: City pays 100% of the premium for Councilmember only. Deferred Comp: Voluntary participation. MEBT, Flexible Spending Account, Employee Assistance Program: Voluntary participation Long Term Disability and Survivor Life: enrolled	Family coverage available; employee pays premiums. (See rates PDF.)
Renton	106,785	M/D/V: City pays for healthcare premiums for Councilmember. Deferred Comp: may participate in programs; City contributes 2% on Councilmember's behalf, and an additional 1.4% if employee is prohibited from participation in PERS. Flexible Spending Account, Transportation Program Benefits (free ORCA card), and Employee Assistance Program: voluntary participation Life Insurance: City paid policy of \$12,500	Family coverage available; employee pays premiums (full premium minus the employee rate). (See rates PDF.)
Kirkland (current)	97,850	M/D/V: Councilmembers have the option of: 1) having the City pay for their participation, as individuals, in the City's M/D/V benefits programs; or 2) in lieu of receiving M/D/V benefits, be paid an allowance of \$470 per month. 3 Councilmembers currently enrolled in health benefits MEBT: Voluntary Plan 1 participation with 6.2% employee match (in lieu of social security). Flexible Spending: voluntary participation. Life Insurance & Accidental Death & Dismemberment: City paid policy is 2x annual salary. Transportation: \$282 per month car allowance and a free ORCA transit pass. Phone: \$50/month in lieu of City-issued phone and data Low-income stipend: \$1000/month for households at or below 30% of King County Median Income; \$700/month for households at or below 50% KCMI; \$400/month for households at or below 80% KCMI. No Councilmembers currently receive this benefit. Childcare: \$1000/month for Councilmembers with dependent children 10 years old or younger (or dependent children with special needs up to age 18). 2 Councilmembers currently receive this benefit.	Family coverage available; employee pays 28.5% of the premium, in line with the premium paid for part-time employees working 26 hours/week (0.65 FTE)

Note: State of Washington Department of Retirement Systems Plan coverage (PERS) is optional for all Elected Officials.

Attachment C
City Demographics

City	Race & Ethnicity	Percent	Income & Poverty	Dollars/Percent
Kirkland	White	65.5	Median Household Income	\$ 144,080
	Black or African American	2.1	Per Capita Income in Past 12 Months (in 2023 dollars)	\$ 97,919
	American Indian and Alaska Native	0.5	Persons in Poverty	6.4%
	Asian	17.9		
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.2		
	Two or More Races	10.3		
	Some Other Race	3.6		
	Hispanic or Latino	7.9		
	White, not Hispanic or Latino	63.8		
Auburn	White	51.6	Median Household Income	\$ 92,824
	Black or African American	7.8	Per Capita Income in Past 12 Months (in 2023 dollars)	\$ 39,399
	American Indian and Alaska Native	2.3	Persons in Poverty	9.6%
	Asian	13.1		
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	3.2		
	Two or More Races	11.7		
	Some Other Race	10.3		
	Hispanic or Latino	18.6		
	White, not Hispanic or Latino	48.6		
Bellevue	White	44.7	Median Household Income	\$ 158,253
	Black or African American	2.6	Per Capita Income in Past 12 Months (in 2023 dollars)	\$ 93,234
	American Indian and Alaska Native	0.4	Persons in Poverty	8.3%
	Asian	40.6		
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.2		
	Two or More Races	8.1		
	Hispanic or Latino	3.4		
	Some Other Race	7.3		
	White, not Hispanic or Latino	43.5		
Bothell	White	65.0	Median Household Income	\$ 132,232
	Black or African American	1.9	Per Capita Income in Past 12 Months (in 2023 dollars)	\$ 52,011
	American Indian and Alaska Native	0.6	Persons in Poverty	5.8%
	Asian	17.7		
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.2		
	Two or More Races	10.6		
	Some Other Race	4.0		
	Hispanic or Latino	9.2		
	White, not Hispanic or Latino	69.3		
Edmonds	White	74.9	Median Household Income	\$ 116,095
	Black or African American	3.2	Per Capita Income in Past 12 Months (in 2023 dollars)	\$ 73,521
	American Indian and Alaska Native	0.6	Persons in Poverty	3.5%
	Asian	8.0		
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.4		
	Two or More Races	10.1		
	Some Other Race	2.9		
	Hispanic or Latino	7.6		
	White, not Hispanic or Latino	73.4		
Everett	White	61.7	Median Household Income	\$ 74,276
	Black or African American	5.4	Per Capita Income in Past 12 Months (in 2023 dollars)	\$ 43,564
	American Indian and Alaska Native	1.3	Persons in Poverty	14.0%
	Asian	9.6		
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	1.3		
	Two or More Races	11.9		
	Some Other Race	8.9		
	Hispanic or Latino	17.2		
	White, not Hispanic or Latino	58.6		
Federal Way	White	41.0	Median Household Income	\$ 81,997
	Black or African American	14.4	Per Capita Income in Past 12 Months (in 2023 dollars)	\$ 43,197
	American Indian and Alaska Native	1.2	Persons in Poverty	14.0%
	Asian	15.5		
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	4.1		
	Two or More Races	12.4		
	Some Other Race	11.5		
	Hispanic or Latino	20.1		
	White, not Hispanic or Latino	38.5		

Issaquah	White	59.8	Median Household Income	\$	153,786
	Black or African American	2.0	Per Capita Income in Past 12 Months (in 2023 dollars)	\$	89,767
	American Indian and Alaska Native	0.3	Persons in Poverty		5.9%
	Asian	25.9			
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.2			
	Two or More Races	9.3			
	Some Other Race	2.5			
	Hispanic or Latino	7.1			
	White, not Hispanic or Latino	58.1			
Kent	White	39.7	Median Household Income	\$	85,982
	Black or African American	12.8	Per Capita Income in Past 12 Months (in 2023 dollars)	\$	41,167
	American Indian and Alaska Native	1.0	Persons in Poverty		14.4%
	Asian	23.6			
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	2.6			
	Two or More Races	10.7			
	Some Other Race	9.7			
	Hispanic or Latino	16.4			
	White, not Hispanic or Latino	37.4			
Lynnwood	White	52.4	Median Household Income	\$	76,439
	Black or African American	7.4	Per Capita Income in Past 12 Months (in 2023 dollars)	\$	41,614
	American Indian and Alaska Native	1.1	Persons in Poverty		14.2%
	Asian	19.2			
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.7			
	Two or More Races	11.2			
	Some Other Race	8.1			
	Hispanic or Latino	15.7			
	White, not Hispanic or Latino	50.1			
Redmond	White	44.9	Median Household Income	\$	172,979
	Black or African American	2.2	Per Capita Income in Past 12 Months (in 2023 dollars)	\$	93,881
	American Indian and Alaska Native	0.4	Persons in Poverty		5.8%
	Asian	41.0			
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.1			
	Two or More Races	8.2			
	Some Other Race	3.1			
	Hispanic or Latino	7.2			
	White, not Hispanic or Latino	43.5			
Renton	White	41.9	Median Household Income	\$	100,237
	Black or African American	10.1	Per Capita Income in Past 12 Months (in 2023 dollars)	\$	50,303
	American Indian and Alaska Native	0.9	Persons in Poverty		7.0%
	Asian	26.1			
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.8			
	Two or More Races	11.6			
	Some Other Race	8.5			
	Hispanic or Latino	15.5			
	White, not Hispanic or Latino	39.8			

Source: US Census Bureau

Attachment D
Cost of Living

Consumer Price Index for Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue								
CPI Records	Jun-18	Jun-19	Jun-20	Jun-21	Jun-22	Jun-23	Jun-24	Jun-25
CPI-W	3.60%	1.70%	1.00%	6.30%	9.50%	4.50%	3.60%	2.70%
CPI-U	3.30%	2.30%	0.90%	5.50%	10.10%	4.60%	3.80%	2.70%

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics